

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application, and reconsideration of the Office Action dated May 18, 2004. Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 1-12, 14, 15, 17-21, 25, and 26 will remain pending in this application with claims 1-9 being withdrawn from consideration. The changes to each independent claim are supported by the specification and canceled claims 13 and 16. No new matter is incorporated by this Amendment.

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Claims 10, 11, 13, 15, 18, and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly obvious based on Kamitani (U.S. Pat. No. 6,028,762) in view of Shamouilian et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,320,736).

The Office Action asserts Kamitani describes each feature of the claimed invention except the height of the outer stepped portion being higher than the protrusions. The Office Action further asserts that Shamouilian describes the stepped portion feature and concludes that the combined teachings of both patents render the claims obvious. Applicants respectfully traverse.

Applicants' invention, as recited in the independent claims, concerns a substrate supporting table and a processing system including the table. The table includes a plurality of protrusions of ceramic formed on the dielectric film by thermal-spraying. Moreover, each protrusion has a top face consisting of a curved surface. In addition, the table includes a stepped portion provided on the surface of the dielectric film so as to extend along an outer peripheral portion of the substrate supporting table. The stepped portion has a height larger than that of the protrusions.

Applicants submit that the cited patents fail to teach or fairly suggest the features of the presently claimed invention detailed above. While Figure 2b of Kamitani shows

the use of protrusions, there is nothing in Kamitami that teaches or fairly suggests that the plurality of protrusions are ceramic and are formed on the dielectric film by thermal-spraying. In addition, there is nothing in Kamitami that teaches or fairly suggests that each protrusion has a top face consisting of a curved surface. Therefore, Kamitami alone does not meet Applicants' independent claims. Shamouilian does not remedy this deficiency of Kamitami. Hence, the independent claims are allowable in view of the particular structure of the protrusions.

There are further reasons why the independent claims are patentable over Kamitami and Shamouilian. The Office Action concedes that Kamitami neither teaches nor fairly suggests a stepped portion having a height larger than that of the protrusions. The Shamouilian patent is relied on as teaching the stepped portion. However, there is nothing in the teaching of either cited patent which suggests modifying the Kamitami chuck (which is concerned with employing grooves for reducing the amount of foreign matter that sticks to the wafer) by employing the stepped portion described by Shamouilian. Hence, those of ordinary skill in the art would not have looked to Shamouilian to modify Kamitami, and therefore Kamitami and Shamouilian are not properly combinable in the manner asserted. Hence, even if their combination were proper, the combined teachings of Kamitami and Shamouilian fail to describe or fairly suggest each and every feature of the independent claims. Thus, in view of the above remarks, this rejection is overcome and its withdrawal is respectfully requested.

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Claims 12, 13, 16, and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly obvious based on Kamitani, Shamouilian, and Grimard (US 5903428).

Claim 20 is rejected 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly obvious based on Kamitani, Shamouilian, and Kitabayashi (US 5530616).

Claim 21 is rejected 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly obvious based on Kamitani, Shamouilian, Kitabayashi, and Grimard (US 5903428).

Claim 25 is rejected 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly obvious based on Kamitani, Shamouilian, and Kamide (US 5306379).

Claim 26 is rejected 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly obvious based on Kamitani, Shamouilian, Kamide, and Grimard.

The above five rejections are addressed together as similar issues apply to each. Moreover, Applicants traverse each rejection.

The deficiencies of Kamitani and Shamouilian are discussed above. None of the other patents cited in the above rejections, however, remedies these deficiencies. None of the cited patents teaches or fairly suggests a table having a plurality of protrusions of ceramic (formed on the dielectric film by thermal-spraying) that have a top face consisting of a curved surface. Furthermore, there is nothing in the teachings of the cited documents which would motivate those of ordinary skill in the art to modify the disclosures of the cited patents to include the above detailed features of the present invention.

Hence, in view of the above remarks, each rejection is overcome and withdrawal of each is respectfully requested.

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Applicants respectfully submit that this Amendment and the above remarks obviate each of the outstanding rejections in this case, thereby placing the application in condition for immediate allowance. Allowance of this application is earnestly solicited.

If any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17 are due in connection with this filing, please charge the fees to Deposit Account No. 02-4300; Order No. 033082.120.

If an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is necessary that is not accounted for in the papers filed herewith, such an extension is requested. The extension fee should be charged to Deposit Account No. 02-4300; Order No. 033082.120.

Respectfully submitted,
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